



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, III CORPS AND FORT HOOD  
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

AFZF-GA-SAFE

22 August 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Labor Day 2002 Safety Message

1. Over a century ago, we celebrated Labor Day for the first time to recognize individuals' hard work within the trade and labor organizations in our communities. Today, we celebrate it as a national holiday, and as a military community, we are especially proud of the hard work in our units and organizations. Over the years, our military labor force has wonderfully complemented the American labor force in sustaining our country's greatness.
2. Labor Day traditionally marks the end of summer and a time when our children are back in school. The long holiday weekend affords most of us a last chance to cap off the summer, spend time with family and friends, and enjoy a late summer weekend together. Although the summer months are passing quickly, leaders must continue to stress the safety programs employed during our Summer Safety Campaign. We have to do this because, frankly, III Corps soldiers are dying in off-duty accidents / car crashes at a high rate. The carnage is unprecedented and the destruction of lives and families is horrific.
3. So far this fiscal year, 30 III Corps soldiers died in various types of accidents, as compared to 26 accidental fatalities for the same period last fiscal year. What is alarming about this year's fatality rate is that 17 of the 30 deaths occurred in just the last four months. Sixteen of our soldiers have been killed in POV accidents this year. Since eleven of 16 POV fatalities this year occurred since the start of our Summer Safety Campaign, we have to conclude that the campaign has not succeeded. Now we must double our existing POV safety efforts – above and beyond the regular weekend briefs, POV inspections, and safety campaign programs. Battalion Commanders and their Command Sergeants Major must exert their leadership and influence. Speed, fatigue, alcohol, recklessness, and not wearing seatbelts played major roles in the POV deaths. These major roles are all avoidable with individual discipline and leadership being effectively engaged. Our great soldiers are in the Army 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They deserve our full time leadership. Another important and sad statistic is that suicides have taken the lives of four III Corps soldiers so far this fiscal year, which is the same number as for the same period of last year.
4. It goes without saying that this accident "record" does not reflect our Army values, goals, and objectives, nor does it suggest a fully engaged and effective leadership set. I believe that the only thing that will stop this carnage is self discipline on soldiers parts, and leaders enforcing standards, 24/7. In support of the upcoming holiday weekend, leaders must re-train appropriate off-duty safety standards to ensure their soldiers know and do the right things to keep them alive. There are many potential dangers waiting for our soldiers over the Labor Day holiday period including extensive / long POV travel, water and recreational activities, and sun/heat exposure. An additional seasonal danger is hunting accidents.
5. I want your first line leaders (e.g. junior sergeants and company grade officers) to work with soldiers on a one-on-one basis to coach them on their intended POV travel and recreational plans and provide advice as warranted. Battalion Commanders and Command Sergeants Major must lead this effort. Your junior leaders have the best positive impact on young soldiers because these leaders are aware of their

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soldiers' off duty habits. Charge your junior leaders with cultivating safe driving habits among their soldiers.

6. Safety is a paramount responsibility of our Army. It demands caring and involved leaders and disciplined and aware soldiers. As always, our mission is an enjoyable and accident-free holiday. We must make this holiday a memorable one by not having one soldier, family member, or Army civilian injured or killed. Continue your diligent focus on safety, and personally commit your leadership and soldiers towards this end.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B B Bell". The signature is stylized with large, flowing letters.

B. B. BELL  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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